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A TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF THAT PRINCELY AMERICAN THE LATE HENRY M. FLAGLER

Through whose splendid Efforts in Reclamation, Railway, Hotel and City Building, Florida, the Land of the Palm and Pine, was largely made Possible, and Habitable and a Nation's Playground.

BY

Charles Eugene Clark

Vice-President of THE PEOPLES SAVINGS BANK AND TRUST COMPANY

Covington, Kentucky

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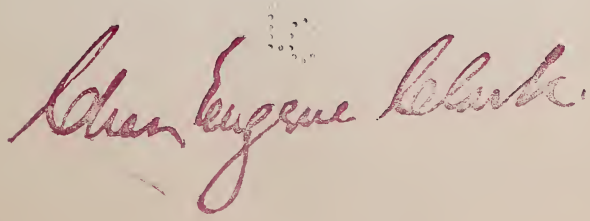

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"We Become Willing Servants To The Good, By The Bonds Their Virtues Lay Upon Us."

In this day of fault finding and princely giving and especially when the Standard Oil Company and its personnel are so largely in the limelight, and when the stocks of the parent Company and its numerous subsidiaries are being so eagerly sought by investors, all over the land, the public attention naturally centers in that distinguished group of men who laid the foundation and brought to great fruition the fortunes of this most successful of all business organizations.

For the Standard Oil Company has made more men rich, and brought a goodly competency to many more, than any other organization in our financial and industrial history. It was able to do this, because of its matchless management, by a body of men, who, as directing heads, have been unequalled throughout the business world.

Notwithstanding much of common report to the contrary, its great business, which covers the entire commercial and oil consuming world, was not built up in a day, but was of careful and steady growth; and is the result of the very best of industrial and commercial achievements.

In its years of great success, this Company always laid away out of its earnings a surplus, in order to build up a healthy reserve, not only in the parent Company, but in each of its subsidiaries, so as to take advantage of every business opportunity, as they should arise, and which often called for a quick and large outlay of funds, with corresponding profits, as the great oil discoveries were made, and which demanded heavy purchases of oil-bearing territory, the construction of ample pipe lines, tanks, and other conveniences, for caring for, storing, refining and marketing the oil and its products.

While many other industrial and commercial concerns, including Oil Companies, both producing and refining, paid large

dividends, which often were in fact, not earned, but simply paid, to boost their capital stocks, deceive the public and enrich their promoters, the Standard Oil Company continued in the even tenor of its way, steadily pushing onward, always setting aside, out of its ever growing profits, ample funds to meet all the contingencies of the trade.

This policy gave it dominance, in its line of business, made it financially independent and the holders of its stock extremely rich; and brought to the fore those of its personnel, who believed in the Company, and directed its fortunes. And thus Jno. D. and William Rockefeller, Henry M. Flagler, Henry H. Rogers, Jno. D. Archibald, the Pratts, Harknesses, Andrews, Bedfords, Crawfords, and many others of that brilliant and fortunate galaxy of its official family, naturally attracted the attention of the nation by reason of their achievements and the prominence and wealth the Company's success gave and brought to them.

These men had faith in their Company, and did all that was possible and compatible with honorable business thrift and foresight, to make it the grand success that it has achieved.

Of that brilliant coterie of men, who were of the Company, and dominated its policy, it was my good fortune and pleasure to become personally acquainted with the late Henry M. Flagler, while I was sojourning at St. Augustine, during the administration of the late President Benjamin Harrison; and although a mere wayfarer whom chance had brought in contact with Mr. Flagler, his treatment and consideration of me were most gracious and affable. During my stay at St. Augustine, I had the pleasure of seeing and conversing with him most every day; and notwithstanding his great wealth and accomplishment, I found him in the midst of his wonderful achievements, a polished and courteous gentleman; one most simple and democratic in his life and manners, and without the least pretension to superiority.

As I measured his colossal attainments in the domain of trade, in railway construction and city building, as well as in the partial reclamation and making habitable and possible, the enjoyment of a great State, and bringing its many and varied attractions within the reach and purse of the millionaire and pauper, I thought his largeness of purpose and great executive ability were only equalled by his modesty, sociability and humanity. For

through his efforts Florida was made susceptible of settlement and enjoyment, to a degree never dreamed of, nor attaind, before his coming to the land of flowers. I found him an ever courteous gentleman, one who by his daily life and conduct, as he mingled with his fellow men, demonstrated that "All of chivalry was in courtesy," and that graciousness was ever the badge of greatness.

His character and conduct, were ever devoid of arrogance and egotism, and abounded in liberality and kindness. Evidences of his generosity and thoughtfulness for others were ever visible in the serviceable and artistic structures that were made possible by his munificence, as well as by that generous hospitality, always shown to the worthy.

With an eye ever for the beautiful, he was eminently practical, and his life and accomplishments will square in every particular, with that dictum of Lord Bacon's, wherein it is maintained "Unless that which we do is useful, glory is in vain."

For his was a life of opportunity, duty and loving service, the sum total of a most successful life.

Mr. Flagler traversed the entire East coast of the land of the Everglades with the great steel highways of locomotion and commerce. He spanned its great rivers with mighty drawbridges, rebuilt and beautified its ancient cities and founded new ones, by building and encouraging others to erect grand and commodious hotels, in keeping with their surrounding landscapes.

He restored old churches and erected new ones, which are a credit to any community, and caused to be established model hospitals, laundries, parks, swimming pools. He drained the swamps, paved the streets and created semi-tropical gardens, that are veritable oasis in the Florida sands, all of which attest the largess and calibre of the man.

The Ponce de Leon, the Cordova and the Alcazar, with their elegant appointments and their beautiful Moorish architecture, as they burst upon our vision, are like a rich setting, out of our old Andalusia, which by some miracle had been wafted from old Spain, to the shores of the Matanzas. But as we partook of their hospitality, and that of their generous patron, we found them most real and substantial.

True, Mr. Flagler had seemingly boundless wealth at his command and spent it lavishly, but ever wisely, for it was all

dominated by most noble and utilitarian ideas and made to serve to the largest and most beneficial degree possible, the general weal.

The only prerogative that this modest and urbane American possessed beyond that of any other mortal who was privileged to enjoy the sweets of life at St. Augustine, was that Mr. Flagler, as host, was enabled to entertain his chosen friends and guests, in as fitting and royal a manner as might any potentate in Europe. This privilege and opportunity, ever the consequence of wealth and culture, is pardonably human.

Through the efforts of Mr. Flagler, fulfilling a larger vision, and executing a dream of reclaimed empire for the enjoyment of mankind through the building of his hotels and railways, much of the land of the Seminole was made accessible to the tourist and settler; and likewise possible for the wearied invalid, in search of relief from harrowing sickness and pain to be wooed back to life and health, as he enjoying modern comforts, is regaled by the salubrious breezes and the glorious warmth and sunshine of this bridal land of old Ocean; one whose shores are laved by the warm life-giving currents of the Gulf, while its uttermost parts are permeated by the ozone of the sea, which when combined with the fragrance of its groves of orange and pine, constitute the elixir of life, of that grand and glorious climate, of this matchless southland, which restores strength to the worn and wearied, dams back the course of time, prolonging the life of the aged, and reinforces vigorous manhood, giving it an added interest in and lease on life.

Is not its incomparable climate endowed with some of the magical properties of that mythical spring, sought so earnestly and long by that Spanish cavalier, Ponce de Leon, a draught of whose life-giving waters, insured perpetual youth? For surely the many enjoyments of this glorious Arcadian land, with its restfulness, healthfulness and peace stay somewhat the hand of time, mend the ravages of disease, prolong life and intensify and multiply the joys of human existence.

In order to properly estimate the life and worth of such a man as Henry M. Flagler, we must be big enough to fully conceive and truly gauge the high ideals that actuated the man and his accomplishments. For Mr. Flagler rose, through industry, attention and foresight, to a position of great wealth, and then

found an outlet for his energy and ambition, backed by his means, to become a benefactor of mankind, in opening and making better known, for the use and enjoyment of the countless millions of our population, this Italy of America, this land of Palm and Pine, with all its magnificent harbors, great rivers, sparkling lakes, wide prairies, with their possibilities of limitless wealth and its salubrious woods and groves, abounding with their wondrous and innumerable species of teeming life of land, water and air.

Not content with the reclamation of the mainland of a great state, with its consequent marvelous settlement and development, largely the fruit of his achievement, he strove for the conquest of the sea and dominated old Neptune, by building at enormous expense, and in the face of every possible difficulty, that most wonderful of all railways, from key to key, across and through some seventy-five miles of the gulf, from the mainland to Key West, and which road is known as the Railway over the Sea.

Such a man and such a life, with its grand and glorious achievements, is an inspiration. It teaches that life is truly a progression, and that it is possible to use great talents, energy and wealth, both profitably and grandly, in furthering the laudible ambition of its possessor, and for the common weal. It is a sermon to the idle rich, and teaches that there is an honest use for money, rather than its shameless waste, and that he who so handles and employs his wealth for the benefit of his fellowmen, is in truth, a steward of the Lord, and a benefactor of his kind.

Such a man and such a work as was Henry M. Flagler's, emblazon the paths of hope and progress; it raises to a high and honorable place individual accomplishment and emphasizes individual capacity, taste and virtue, and belies the universal mediocrity of a socialist philosophy and ever nerves the human heart to successful and worthy endeavor; and beautifies and glorifies human existence.

His life and its accomplishment was his message, and will ever perpetuate him in the world of effort and endeavor, as it shall be demonstrated that the cause for which he lived and wrought will ever more largely serve mankind.

It demonstrates that the parable of the talents, as taught by our Lord and Saviour, has its application in every day life,

though some nineteen hundred years have elapsed, since it was authoritively announced "That to him who hath, shall be given, while unto him who hath not, shall be taken away, that even which he hath." For if we strive to honorably use (rather than permit to lie dormant and idle, and mould and waste away) that which we have, our possessions will increase and multiply, and we shall ever grow rich in beauty and service, and secure the commendation of all right thinking men, even as has Henry M. Flagler. For it is through duty and service that we truly enter life, through the gate called Beautiful, just by living up to, and fulfilling the opportunities of our everyday life.

May a benign Providence ever guide and sustain those worthy lieutenants, and that gracious helpmate of this great captain and apostle of kindliness and progression, who has passed on to his greater reward, and left to them the legacy and duty of fulfilling his great mission, so that the plans drawn by him on the trestle board of his life's ambition, in which there was traced so much of human kindness, may be by them executed, even to the last degree, so that every good and helpful intention of Mr. Flagler, may be fulfilled and his glorious dreams become grandest realities in which the people of Florida in particular, and the nation in general, shall be the beneficiaries. Through his and their efforts, may Florida, while fully serving its own, ever become and continue to a larger degree, an asylum for the ailing and afflicted of the land, within whose hospitable borders they may find recreation and rest, while the glow of health shall once again suffuse their countenance, and vigorous life course their veins, and being fully restored, return them to their friends.

May Henry M. Flagler's life and accomplishment be ever a beacon on the horizon of human endeavor. May his rise to eminence be ever an inspiration to every worthy struggling, striving American, who would honorably better his condition. To me as I struggle upward, he is a royal pattern of exalted manhood. And may this shining example of the truly beneficial employment of talent and great wealth, as illustrated in his life and works ever illumine the cause, set a noble precedent for emulation in the lives of all worthy Americans, that in passing "they may leave something so done that we shall not willingly let it die."

For,

"When the last dawns are fallen on gray,
And all Life's toils and ease complete;
They know who work, not they who play,
If rest is sweet."

CHAS. EUGENE CLARK, Covington, Ky.

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